

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MEXICO 04572 01 OF 02 050135Z

63

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SCCT-02 DRC-01 /098 W

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P 042346Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1931

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 MEXICO 4572

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS MX

SUBJ: DEVELOPMENTS IN CASE OF SEN. RUBEN FIGUEROA

REF: MEXICO 4508

1. SUMMARY: IT IS NOW CONFIRMED THAT FIGUEROA, AND FOUR PERSONS WHO ACCOMPANIED HIM TO MEETING HE REQUESTED WITH CABANAS, ARE BEING DETAINED BY GUERRILLAS. GOM INTERIOR SECRETARY IN PRESS CONFERENCE CONDEMNED CABANAS'S CONDUCT AND FAILURE TO KEEP WORD IN STRONG TERMS BUT HEDGED ON GOM POLICY IN CASE. END SUMMARY.

2. SECRETARY OF GOBERNACION (INTERIOR) MARIO MOYA PALENCIA HELD PRESS CONFERENCE ON FIGUEROA CASE AFTERNOON OF JUNE 3 AFTER HE EMERGED FROM THREE-HOUR MEETING WITH PRES. ECHEVERRIA. MOYA DISTRIBUTED COPIES OF MAY 9 LETTER FROM CABANAS AND ASSOCIATES TO FIGUEROA, GRANTING HIS REQUEST FOR MEETING AND SETTING MAY 25 (LATER CHANGED TO MAY 30) AS DATE THEREOF. CABANAS LETTER ESTABLISHES PRECONDITION FOR MEETING: THAT ARMY TROOPS, JUDICIAL POLICE AND "SECRET SERVICE" BE WITHDRAWN, AND MUNICIPAL POLICE CONFINED TO BARRACKS, IN FOUR VILLAGES (SAME AS THOSE LISTED REFTEL) FOR ONE WEEK BEFORE PROPOSED DATE OF MEETING AND FOR AT LEAST ONE WEEK AFTERWARDS.(ALTHOUGH MOYA DID NOT

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PAGE 02 MEXICO 04572 01 OF 02 050135Z

SAY SO, IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT GOM DID NOT COMPLY WITH THIS

CONDITION, NOR APPARENTLY DID FIGUEROA ASK GOM TO DO SO).

3. CABANAS LETTER THEN ESTABLISHES ELABORATE INSTRUCTIONS FOR FIGUEROA TO MAKE CONTACT WITH GUIDE, STIPULATES NUMBER OF PERSONS NOW CONDUCTING OPERATIONS. PRESSED ON THE POINT, HE DENIED THAT STAND-DOWN IMPLIED GOM ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE OF FIGUEROA MEETING WITH CABANAS. THROUGHOUT, HE FAILED TO SPECIFY DATE ON WHICH STAND-DOWN WAS INITIATED AND IN FACT TRIED TO INDICATE THAT LACK OF ACTIVITY WAS NORMAL -- ALTHOUGH CONCEDED TOO THAT GOM HAD KNOWN, THROUGH INTERVIEW PUBLISHED MAY 14, OF FIGUEROA'S INTENT TO SEEK INTERVIEW.

8. MOYA NAMED TWO OF THOSE WHO HAD ACCOMPANIED FIGUEROA, BOTH EMPLOYEES OF RIVER BALSAS COMMISSION: SECRETARY LIC. FEBRONIO DIAZ FIGUEROA (A RELATIVE), AND MISS GLORIA BRITO, A STENOGRAPHER. (PRESS ACCOUNTS INDICATE THAT OTHER TWO PERSONS, UNNAMED, WERE A DRIVER AND AN UNCLE OF CABANAS WHO WAS LIAISON MAN AND WAS TO HAVE GUARANTEED FIGUEROA'S SAFETY. FIGUEROA TOOK NONE OF HIS NUMEROUS REGULAR BODY-GUARDS, AND ALL ACCOUNTS STRESS THAT HE HIMSELF WENT UNARMED).

9. CABANAS ORGANIZATION IS ALSO CREDITED WITH KIDNAPPING OF SON OF GUERRERO STATE CTM LEADER, WHO WAS HELD FOR 14 DAYS AND RELEASED ON JUNE 1 (BY WHICH TIME FIGUEROA WAS PRESUMABLY ALREADY IN CAPTIVITY) AFTER FAMILY HAD PAID RANSOM OF BETWEEN ONE AND TWO MILLION PESOS.

10. MEANWHILE, GUERRERO GOV. ISMAEL NOGUEDA OTERO SAID STATE GOVT HAD COMPLIED TO EXTENT OF ITS POWERS BY WITHDRAWING JUDICIAL POLICE AND STATE PUBLIC SECURITY AGENTS FROM THE FOUR SPECIFIED TOWNS, BUT WITHDRAWAL OF ARMY UNITS WOULD DEPEND ON MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE. GEN. SALVADOR RANGEL MEDINA, COMMANDER OF 27TH MILITARY ZONE, TOLD PRESS HE WOULD WITHDRAW 28TH INFANTRY BATTALION (ONE OF ONLY FOUR HE SAID WERE STATIONED ALONG GUERRERO COAST) FROM AREA IN QUESTION ONLY ON RECEIPT OF ORDERS FROM ABOVE, INDICATING HE HAD RECEIVED NO SUCH ORDERS EITHER BEFORE FIGUEROA'S SCHEDULED MEETING OR SINCE JUNE 2 COMMUNIQUE BECAME KNOWN.

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PAGE 01 MEXICO 04572 02 OF 02 050111Z

63

ACTION ARA-20

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P 042346Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1932

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 MEXICO 4572

11. SPOKESMAN FOR FIGUEROA'S FAMILY EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT "GOM WILL ATTEND TO THE DEMANDS OF THE KIDNAPPERS". PRI MAINTAINED SILENCE ON CASE BUT OTHER THREE REGISTERED PARTIES ALL DENOUNCED THE CRIME. STATION WAGON IN WHICH FIGUEROA AND PARTY WERE TRAVELING WAS REPORTEDLY FOUND 15 KM FROM TOWN OF ATOYAC, "IN DIRECTION OF THE SIERRA," NIFHT OF JUNE 3 BY SOLDIERSGN JUDICIAL POLICE, AND AGENTS OF FEDERAL SECURITY DIRECTORATE (SUGGESTING THAT SOME SECURITY FORCES ARE IN FACT STILL OPERATING IN THE AREA). FINALLY, ONE PRESS REPORT INDICATES THAT FIGERUOA'S LAST WORDS TO FRIENDS BEFORE DEPARTING TO MEET CABAN S

WERE" "I'M GOING TO PRESENT A BIG POLITICAL SUPRISE AT THE (CNC) ASSEMBLY ON SUNDAY (JUNE 2)" -- PRESUMABLY A REFERENCE TO HOPED-FOR PACT WITH CABANAS.

12. COMMENT: MOYA'S LONG SESSION WITH ECHEVERRIA AND MIXTURE OF OUTRAGE AND CONCILIATION IN HIS STATEMENT TO PRESS UNDERLINE THE SERIOUS DILEMMA WHICH THIS CASE CONSTITUTES FOR GOM, AS FORESEEN REFTEL. FROM ONE POINT OF VIEW, GOM SIMPLY CANNOT HAVE A GOVERNOR-TO-BE LIQUIDATED BY GUERRILLAS; ON THE OTHER HAND, ANY DEPARTURE IN THIS CASE FROM HAR

LINE ESTABLISHED LAST YEAR (WHEN GUADALAJARA INDU TRIALIST FERNANDO ARANGUREN WAS MURDERED BY HIS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 MEXICO 04572 02 OF 02 050111Z

ABDUCTORS) IS LIKELY TO DRAW STRONG DISAPPROVAL FROM PRIVATE SECTOR. LITTLE MOVEMENT CAN B EXPECTED UNTIL DEMAN S OF CABANAS GROUP BECOME KNOWN, AND IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER GOM'S APPRAENT HALF-WAY MEASURE IN SAYING IT WILL CONFINE TROOPS AND POLICE TO BARRACKS, WITHOUT REMOVING THEM ENTIRELY FROM THE AREA, WILL SATISFY CABANAS PRECONDITION TO NEGOTIATIONS (REFTEL, PARA 4).

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